

[REDACTED]

Approved For Release 2006/01/10 : CIA-RDP81B00401R000200080009-6

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14 September 1979

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Confidence Concerning the Mission of Soviet
Ground Forces in Cuba in the Fall of 1962

1. In response to your question concerning the mission of the four brigades in 1962 and our confidence in defining that mission, we believe that the best explanation for their presence is that these units were deployed primarily at four locations in Cuba between August and October 1962 as defense forces for the sites being built for Soviet MRBMs and IRBMs.

2. In 1962 the structure and size of the units at the four camps was similar. All were combat-capable and highly mobile armored groups. Although we have not seen any unique equipment or facility which would correlate with any specific mission, three of the units were located in the vicinity of offensive missile complexes. The unit at Artemisa was 20 km southwest of the IRBM complex at Guanajay and 55 km east of the MRBM complex at San Cristobal. The unit at Remedios was 5 km north of the Remedios IRBM complex and 37 km southwest of the MRBM complex at Sagua La Grande. Santiago de las Vegas is approximately 30 km from the IRBM complex at Guanajay. The ground unit at Holguin was approximately 400 km from the nearest offensive missile complex and controlled the highway network between the US base at Guantanamo and the missile bases.

3. The withdrawal of Soviet ground forces in 1963-1964 was judged to have removed the four armored brigades as organized units. Although some Soviet troops remained, they were judged to be present in a training capacity to assist the Cubans in assimilating the Soviet equipment becoming available to them.

This memorandum was prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency, Task Force Alpha. Any comments or questions should be addressed to [REDACTED]

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14 September 1979

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Preliminary Response to Your Questions Concerning
the Photographic History of Santiago de las Vegas

1. In response to your question regarding photography of the withdrawal of Soviet ground forces from Santiago, we have completed a preliminary review of photography of the unit there which was taken in the early 1960s. Thus far, we have observed no sudden or significant influx or withdrawal of equipment at Santiago de las Vegas during the time of the Soviet withdrawal in 1962 and 1963.

2. A 17 August 1963 review of aerial photography of the camps

concluded that the Soviet presence at Santiago might have been reduced to a maintenance and advisory force of about 200 personnel.

3. We have not as yet reviewed the low-level photography on which the 1963 judgement was primarily based but we have ordered the coverage along with additional overhead photography of other Soviet facilities in Cuba in the early 1960s. The photography should arrive tomorrow, and we will begin reviewing it immediately.

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